

## **Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA)**

April 2005 – March 2006 Program Year

The Utah Department of Community and Culture (DCC), Division of Housing & Community Development (HCD) administers the HOPWA grant for rural Utah. The State of Utah received \$111,000 in April 2005 to provide HOPWA assistance for rural Utah. Rural Utah includes all counties except for Salt Lake, Summit, and Tooele counties. (Salt Lake City Corp. administers the HOPWA Program for the Salt Lake City metropolitan statistical area (MSA) which includes Salt Lake, Summit, and Tooele counties.)

Both the State and the Salt Lake City Corp. HOPWA Programs are coordinated through the State HIV/AIDS Housing Steering Committee (SHAHSC). The SHAHSC was organized in 1997. It is a statewide body of housing advocates, providers, and consumers whose mission statement is: "To facilitate the creation and maintenance of affordable quality housing opportunities for people living with HIV/AIDS". The Utah State HIV/AIDS Housing Plan was updated in June 2001 and again in 2005 with the help of AIDS Housing Washington (AHW). The State and Salt Lake City HOPWA staff liaisons are members of the SHAHSC Executive Board. The SHAHSC has been adopted by DCC as a subcommittee of the Olene Walker Housing Trust Fund Board.

The State in cooperation and coordination with the State HIV/AIDS Housing Steering Committee (SHAHSC) awarded HOPWA funds for the following activities: tenant-based rental assistance (TBRA); short-term rent, mortgage, utility (STRMU) assistance; and a statewide housing coordinator to identify and to develop housing assistance resources.

### **Project Accomplishment and Overview:**

Salt Lake Community Action Program (SLCAP): SLCAP acts as the gatekeeper and referral agency and also provides STRMU assistance. They spent \$10,003 to assist thirteen (13) persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) households. SLCAP provides this assistance for rural Utah counties south and east of Salt Lake County. (They also provide the same assistance under contract with SLC Corp. for the Salt Lake City MSA.)

Ogden City Housing Authority (OCHA): OCHA provided TBRA for eleven (11) PLWHA households for a total of \$30,822 in costs. These households are immediately placed on the Section-8 waiting list.

Catholic Community Services-Northern Area (CCS): CCS Provided STRMU assistance for fifty-one (51) PLWHA households residing in northern rural Utah (Weber, Morgan, Davis, Rich, Box Elder, and Cache counties) for a total of \$18,074 in costs.

Kenyon Consulting, Inc.: A part-time housing resource person helps to coordinate and develop housing assistance resources. The annual expenditure was \$7,000.

St. George Housing Authority (SGHA): SGHA provided TBRA for five (5) PLWHA households and STRMU for 1 PLWHA. Total cost was \$6,451.

Davis County Housing Authority (DCHA): DCHA provided TBRA for fifteen (15) PLWHA households at a cost of \$55,712.

AIDS Housing of Washington: AHW received \$11,500 to assist the state in updating the State HIV/AIDS Housing Plan in 2005. The State Plan outlines activities, services, and priorities for the HOPWA Program throughout the state including rural Utah and the SLC MSA.

The goal of the TBRA (or HOPWA voucher) is two-fold: 1) it provides immediate housing assistance and 2) it eventually transitions the household into more affordable permanent Section-8 subsidized housing through the housing authorities. While the household is assisted with a HOPWA TBRA voucher they are also put on the housing authority's Section-8 subsidized housing assistance waiting list. When their name comes up for Section-8 housing assistance, the housing authority will move them into more permanent and affordable housing and make room for another household to move onto the HOPWA voucher program. So far this program has been working very well with the average length of stay on the HOPWA voucher program at between eleven to eighteen months. The declining availability of Section-8 housing vouchers, however, will make the HOPWA voucher program more difficult to maintain in the future. Section-8 waiting lists are averaging about two years and some housing authorities have closed their waiting lists while the open waiting lists are expected to grow much longer.

The State is also the Grantee for a Shelter Plus Care (SPC) project designated for persons living with HIV/AIDS. Catholic Community Services is the Project Sponsor of a two-bedroom four-plex apartment building located in Ogden. It was originally hoped that this project would house eight PLWHA but personality clashes among roommates forbids this arrangement from working. Thus the four-plex houses only four (4) PLWHA.

We also partner with the Utah Department of Health (DOH), Ryan White Treatment and CARE Program. DOH provides supportive services such as AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP), COBRA Health Insurance Continuation, High Risk Insurance Pool (HIP) and other supportive and medical services. DOH also provides case management through a contract with the Utah AIDS Foundation (UAF) and the University of Utah Clinic 1A. As members and co-founders of the State HIV/AIDS Housing Steering Committee we collaborate and coordinate services. DCC and Salt Lake City Corp. MSA uses its scarce HOPWA funds primarily for housing assistance while DOH uses its funds primarily for supportive services and case management.

#### Barriers and Trends:

As reported before, although we do have local HOPWA providers in some parts of rural northern and southwestern Utah, there is still difficulty with developing interest of other local agencies to provide HOPWA housing assistance in rural areas. The general social/community climate of the rural counties inhibit PLWHA from coming forward to access HIV/AIDS services locally due to perceived confidentiality concerns. PLWHA would rather travel to the Salt Lake metro area to access services. However, CCS and SLCAP continue to provide outreach STRMU assistance throughout rural Utah.

#### HOPWA Eligibility and Application

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